IS THAT A MESSAGE TO YOU? WHAT DOES IT SAY?
IT'S GIBBERISH. THE A.I. WAS JUST WRITING INSANITY.
IT JUST READS, 'SHE IS.'
ALL THAT FOR 'SHE IS'?
彼女はです, だれ
IT'S SCREWED UP. THE PARTICLES 'DAH' AND 'NEÉ' ARE USED INCORRECTLY.
THEY'RE KIND OF LIKE PUNCTUATION. THEY SHOULD NEVER GO TOGETHER.
IT READS, 'SHE IS DAH NEÉ'. YOU MIGHT LOOSELY TRANSLATE IT AS 'SHE IS...!'
...WITH SOMETHING LIKE A 'DOT DOT DOT' AND A 'BANG'.
WELL, I'M NOT GONNA DISSECT HER, TATSU.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO, SHE NEEDS A NAME.
≥SIGH≤
'DAHNAI' WORKS, I GUESS.
WHY NOT.

January 8, 2056 --

We've re-built the lab in the basement of my home, and we're hiding Dahnai there.

She has the growth profile of a large dog, but learns incredibly fast and hardly ever sleeps. A television is her only company most nights. She watches voraciously.

January 20, 2056 --

Lynn is resigning as my research assistant, because of what she's found in her study of Dahnai...

TATSU, I CAN'T DO THIS.

LYNN, I KNOW SHE'S A HANDFUL, BUT THE RESEARCH...

NO, I CAN HANDLE A LITTLE GIRL.

IT'S THE RESEARCH I CAN'T DO. THIS IS BEYOND ME!

THE FLOOR IS ACID!

IT'S ACID!

DON' TOUCH IT!

LOOK AT THIS ---

HMN. A SKIN CELL?

LIVER CELL? WHERE ARE THE MITOCHONDRIA?

A LIVER CELL.

ACID FLOOR AIN'T GONNA STOP ME!

SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY MITOCHONDRIA. NOT ANYWHERE IN HER BODY.

INSTEAD, THERE APPEAR TO BE ATP-PRODUCING SITES IN THE GOLGI APPARATUS.

THE A.I. USED A CANINE TEMPLATE BECAUSE OF THE PHENOTYPE'S PLASTICITY...

...BUT SHE IS *NOT* A CANINE-HUMAN HYBRID. THIS IS A NEW LIFEFORM DESIGNED FROM THE GROUND UP.

I CAN'T DO THIS. *WE* CAN'T DO THIS, NOT IN THIS LAB.

CALL A NOBEL PRIZEWINNER, LIKE LOLA LAMB. SHE'D PROBABLY *KILL* TO STUDY DAHNAI.

TATSU!

TATSU, TATSU, THE FLOOR IS ACID!

WHAT YOU STANDIN' ON?

WHERE YOU GONNA GO?

THE JOURNAL GOT SCATTERED AFTER THAT.

February 9, 2057 --
How did I wind up raising a child that grows at an accelerated rate?

May 3, 2057 --
Still researching Dahnai's possible lifespan...

LOOKS LIKE DOCTOR FUMIAKI WAS TOO BUSY WITH DAHNAI TO KEEP HIS DIARY STRAIGHT.

BUT MOST OF WHAT HAPPENED I HAD ALREADY READ ABOUT.

IT'S IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.

July 16, 2057 --
Dahnai escaped! She went dancing at a nightclub downtown. Dancing! I have to go to the police station...

ESPECIALLY THAT SPEECH DAHNAI GAVE AT HER HEARING...

October 10, 2057 --
District court is tomorrow.
They'll decide whether Dahnai has legal personhood or not.
She insists to be allowed to testify on her own behalf.

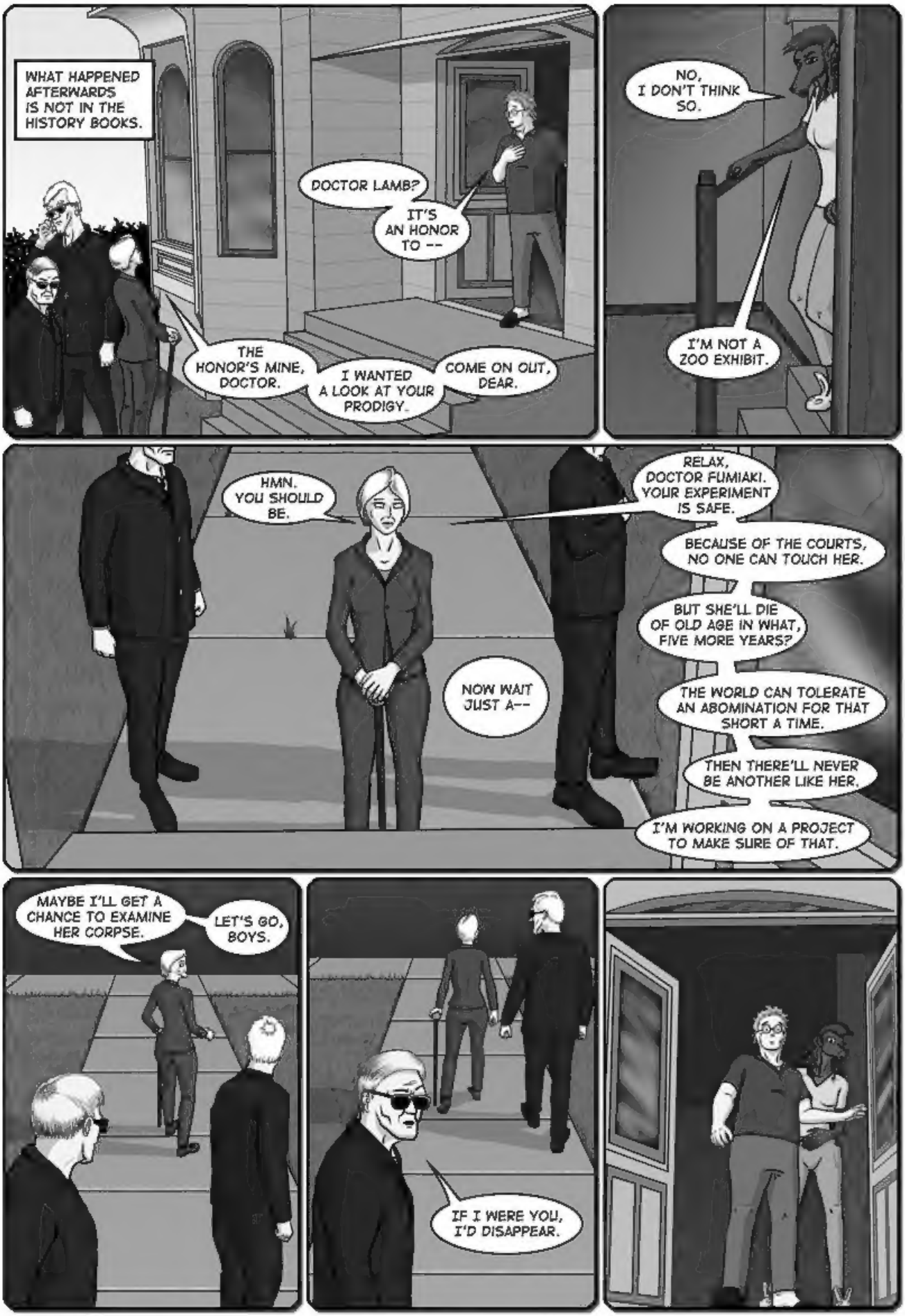
YOU MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM ALIVE.

YOU MUST ACKNOWLEDGE MY SELF--AWARENESS.

I AM NOT ASKING THE COURT TO DECLARE ME A HUMAN BEING.

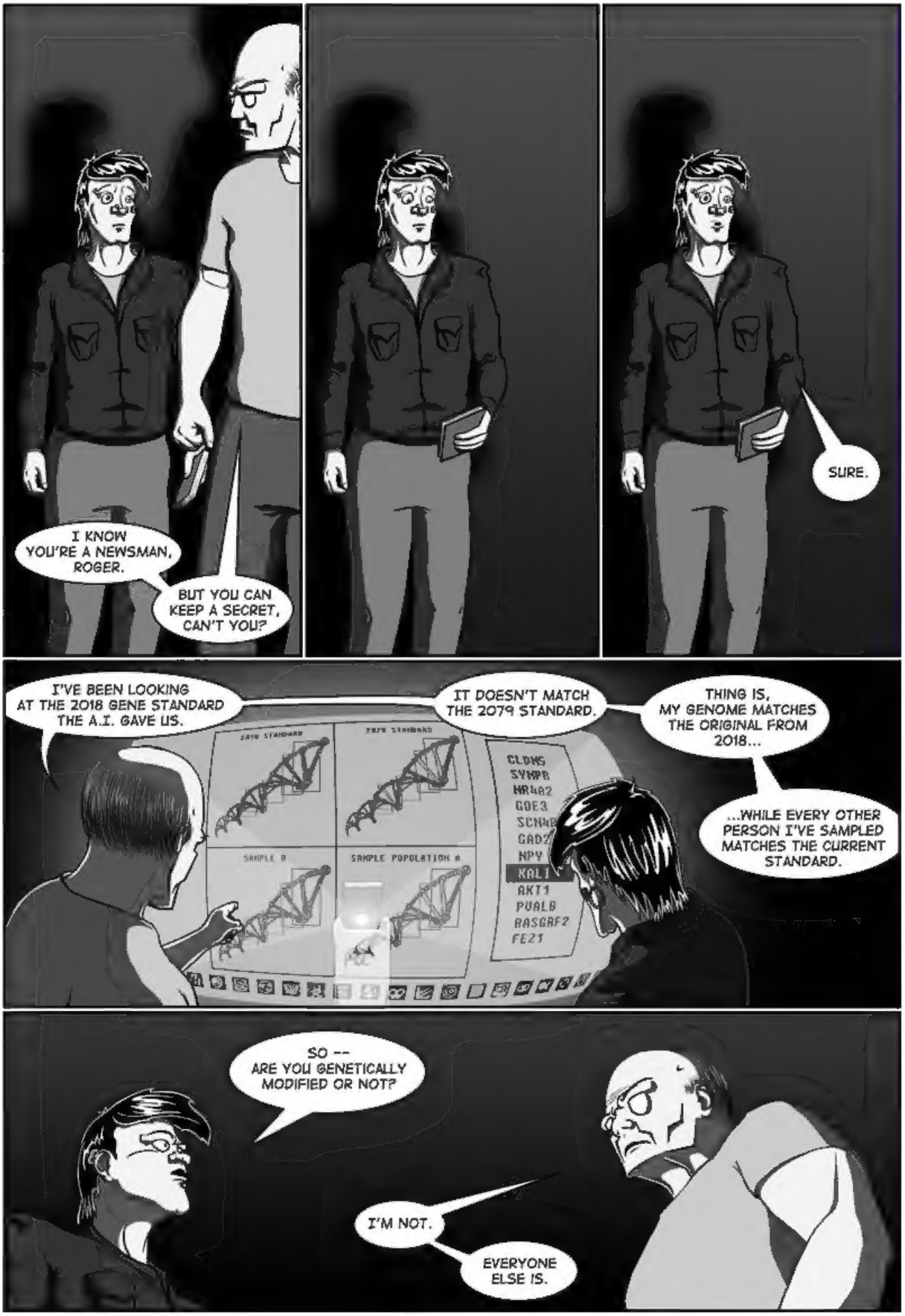
BUT THE FACT THAT I AM A LIVING PERSON?

I DARE YOU TO LOOK ME IN THE EYES AND DENY THAT.


WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS IS NOT IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.
DOCTOR LAMB?
IT'S AN HONOR TO --
THE HONOR'S MINE, DOCTOR.
I WANTED A LOOK AT YOUR PRODIGY.
COME ON OUT, DEAR.
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
I'M NOT A ZOO EXHIBIT.
HMN. YOU SHOULD BE.
RELAX, DOCTOR FUMIAKI. YOUR EXPERIMENT IS SAFE.
BECAUSE OF THE COURTS, NO ONE CAN TOUCH HER.
BUT SHE'LL DIE OF OLD AGE IN WHAT, FIVE MORE YEARS?
NOW WAIT JUST A--
THE WORLD CAN TOLERATE AN ABOMINATION FOR THAT SHORT A TIME.
THEN THERE'LL NEVER BE ANOTHER LIKE HER.
I'M WORKING ON A PROJECT TO MAKE SURE OF THAT.
MAYBE I'LL GET A CHANCE TO EXAMINE HER CORPSE.
LET'S GO, BOYS.
IF I WERE YOU, I'D DISAPPEAR.

TATSU, I'M GOING OUT DANCING WITH THAT ACTOR WE MET.
HE'S GOT TONS OF BODYGUARDS, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT --
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH, I WAS REVISITING SOME CELL LIFETIME RESULTS.
YOU HAVE A MITOTIC PHASE THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
IT COULD DELAY...
...I MEAN, I THOUGHT MAYBE...
HEY. HEY, LISTEN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW LONG I LIVE.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT I LIVED, AND I WAS FREE.
THE WORLD WILL REMEMBER THAT.
DON'T STAY UP TOO LATE, OKAY?
YES. SURE.

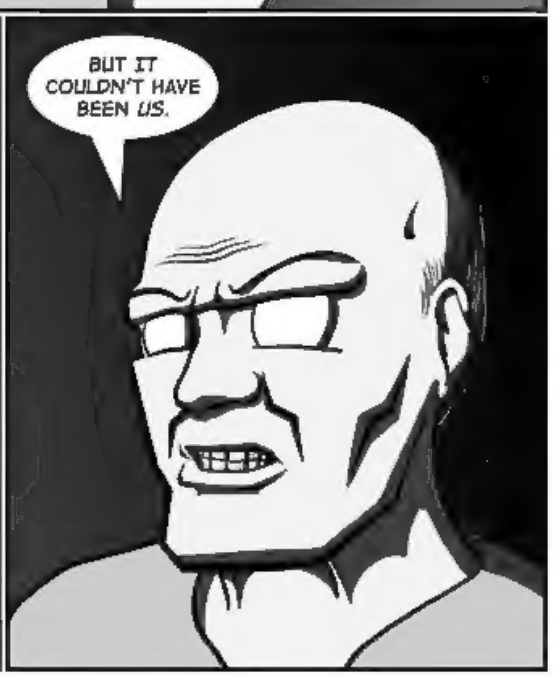
NO MITOCHONDRIA, NO CELL APOPTOSIS.
LYSOSOME SENESCENCE TRIGGERS TELOPHASE.
ARBITRARY NEOTENY, ARBITRARY ONTOGENY.
We have to run, we have to hide.
The A.I. that created Dahnai — he gave her life.
He gave her life!
HE GAVE HER LIFE!
WOW.
ROGER!
GYAH!
COME TO MY ROOM.
I HAVE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO SEE.

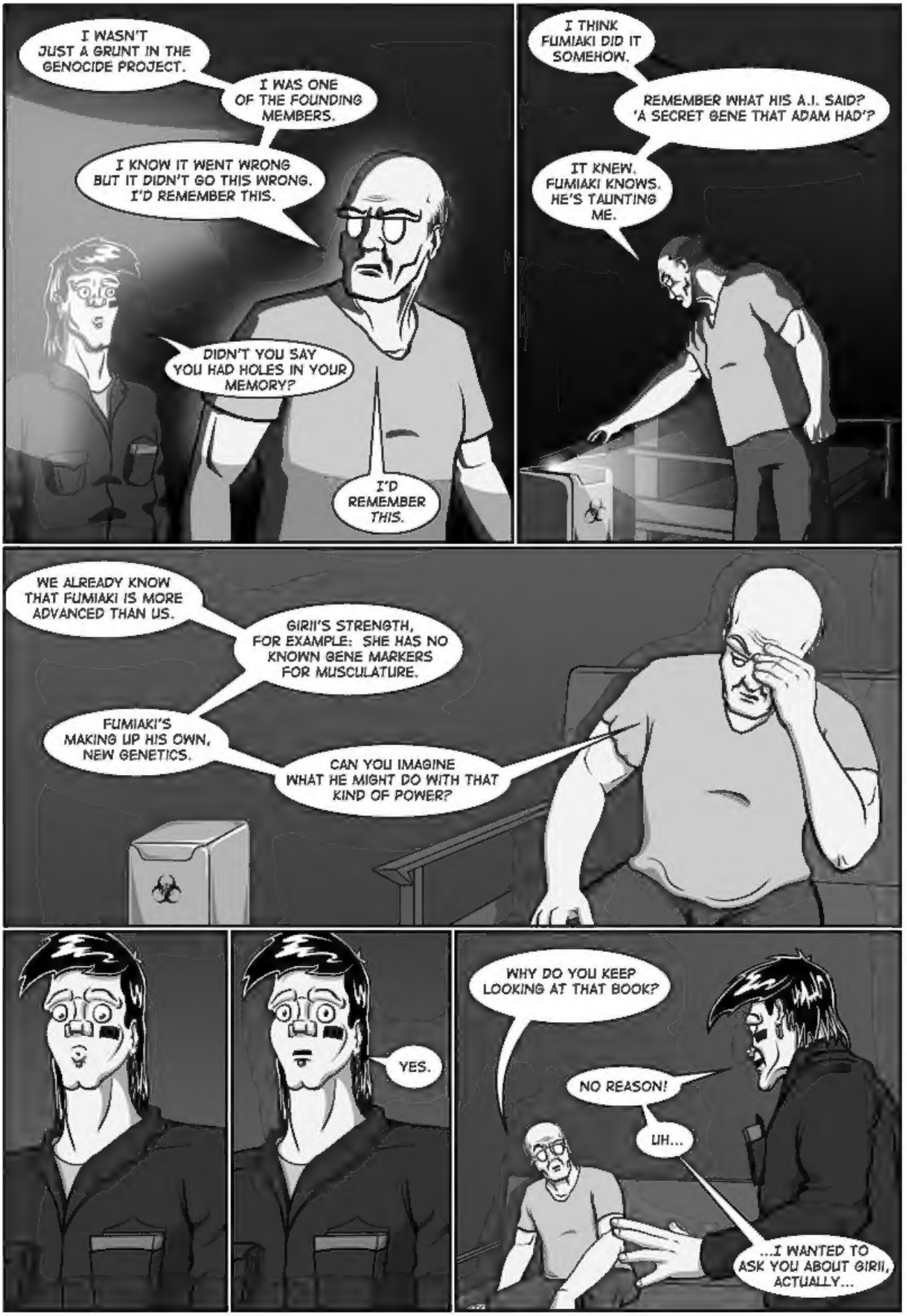

I KNOW YOU'RE A NEWSMAN, ROGER.
BUT YOU CAN KEEP A SECRET, CAN'T YOU?
SURE.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT THE 2018 GENE STANDARD THE A.I. GAVE US.
IT DOESN'T MATCH THE 2079 STANDARD.
THING IS, MY GENOME MATCHES THE ORIGINAL FROM 2018...
...WHILE EVERY OTHER PERSON I'VE SAMPLED MATCHES THE CURRENT STANDARD.
SAMPLE B
SAMPLE POPULATION A
CLDN5
NR4A2
GOE3
NPY
KAL1
AKT1
PVALB
BASGRF2
FEZ1
SO -- ARE YOU GENETICALLY MODIFIED OR NOT?
I'M NOT.
EVERYONE ELSE IS.

BETWEEN 2018 AND 2079 SOMETHING CHANGED THE BASE HUMAN GENOME.
MUST HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMICS.
WHAT KIND OF CHANGES?
NOT SURE. THERE ARE A LOT OF TWEAKS, BUT THEY'RE SUBTLE.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, ROGER, YOU NEED TO LET THE WORLD KNOW ABOUT THIS.
BUT FOR NOW, KEEP IT QUIET.
AND DON'T TELL GIRI!...
...BECAUSE SHE'LL ASSUME THE OBVIOUS.

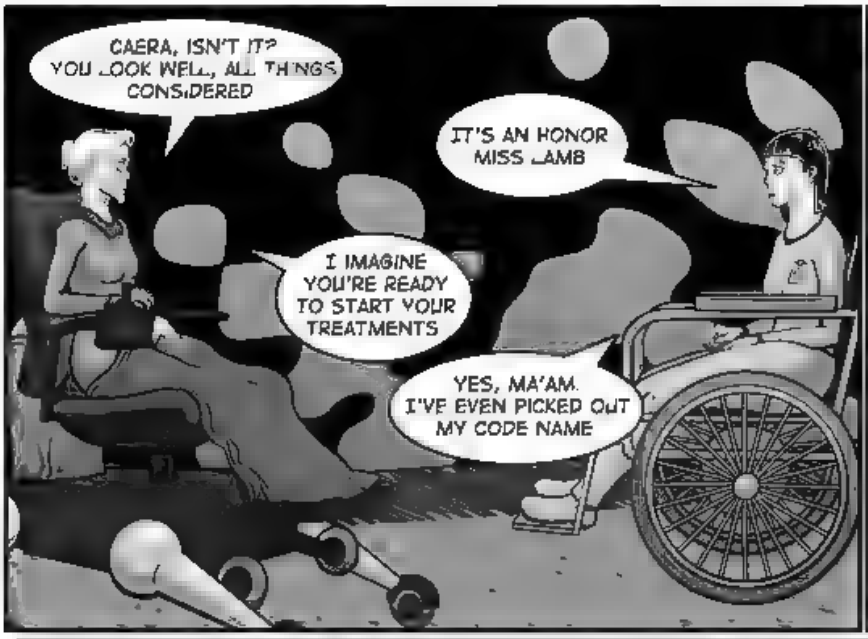
THE OBVIOUS?
YOU MEAN THAT -- ONLY THE GENOCIDE PROJECT COULD HAVE DONE THIS.
YEAH. BUT THAT CAN'T BE TRUE.
WHO ELSE COULD HAVE CHANGED THE REFERENCE STANDARD?
NO ONE THAT I KNOW OF.


BUT IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN US.

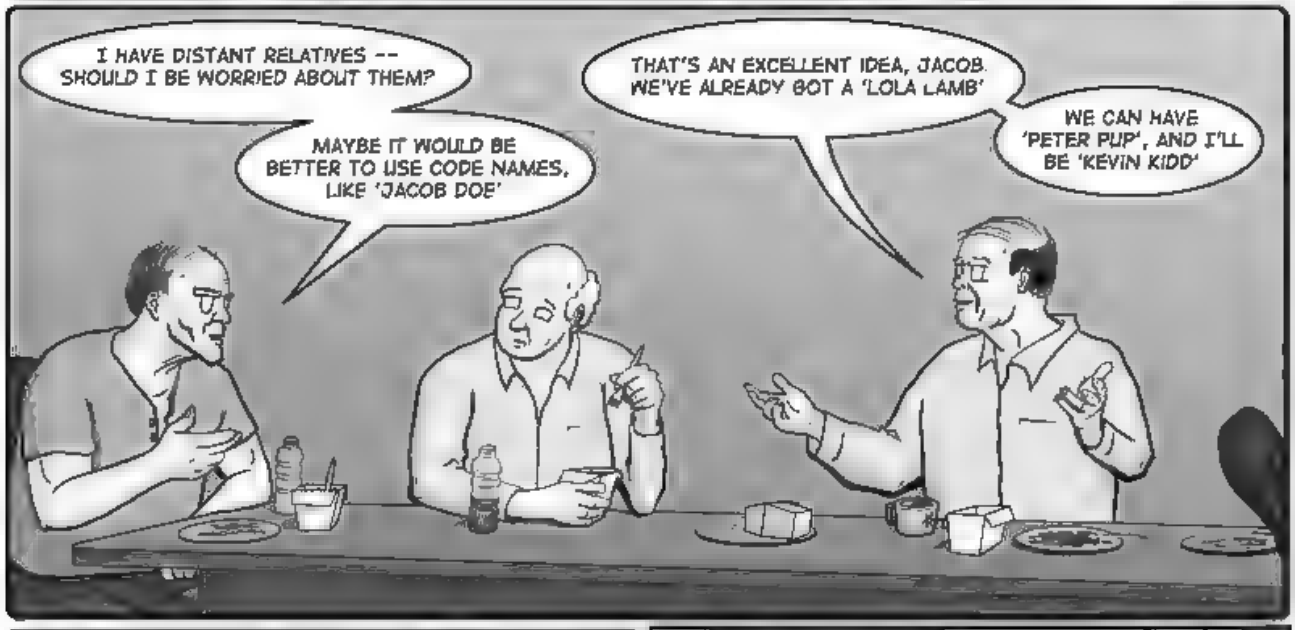

I WASN'T JUST A GRUNT IN THE GENOCIDE PROJECT.
I WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS.
I KNOW IT WENT WRONG BUT IT DIDN'T GO THIS WRONG. I'D REMEMBER THIS.
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU HAD HOLES IN YOUR MEMORY?
I'D REMEMBER THIS.
I THINK FUMIAKI DID IT SOMEHOW.
REMEMBER WHAT HIS A.I. SAID? 'A SECRET GENE THAT ADAM HAD'?
IT KNEW. FUMIAKI KNOWS. HE'S TAUNTING ME.
WE ALREADY KNOW THAT FUMIAKI IS MORE ADVANCED THAN US.
GIRII'S STRENGTH, FOR EXAMPLE: SHE HAS NO KNOWN GENE MARKERS FOR MUSCULATURE.
FUMIAKI'S MAKING UP HIS OWN, NEW GENETICS.
CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT HE MIGHT DO WITH THAT KIND OF POWER?
YES.
WHY DO YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THAT BOOK?
NO REASON!
UH...
...I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT GIRII, ACTUALLY...

YOU'VE, UH, YOU'VE PROBABLY HAD A LOT OF ROMANCES IN YOUR DAY, RIGHT?
NOT ALL THAT MANY. WHY?
WELL, UM, IF YOU THINK YOU LIKE A GIRL...
...HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SHE LIKES YOU, OR IF... I MEAN, SHE'S....
SIGH
SHE'S AN EVIL MIND-CONTROLLING WITCH WHO WILL USE ME LIKE A DISPOSABLE DRIVE.
ISN'T SHE?
ROGER, I'M A SOLDIER. THAT MEANS I'M USED TO TAKING ORDERS.
THE TRICK IS KNOWING THAT YOUR COMMANDERS ARE GIVING ORDERS THAT ARE MORALLY JUSTIFIED.
SO FAR, GIRII IS DOING THAT.
IF SOMEDAY SHE ISN'T, I'LL USE THE SOLDIER'S PREROGATIVE....
...SHOOT HER IN THE BACK WHEN SHE'S LEAST EXPECTING IT.
MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T BRING YOUR LITTLE ROMANTIC PROBLEMS TO ME ANYMORE, ROGER.
YEAH, DON'T WORRY. WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

MEANWHILE... IN LONDON...
WELCOME TO GENOCIDE PROJECT HEADQUARTERS, CAERA
WE'LL GET YOU A FULL TOUR IN A BIT
FIRST, THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT YOU TO MEET
IS THAT LOLA LAMB?
THAT'S THE IMPRESSION SHE GIVES, ISN'T IT?
SHE'S SO FRAIL
LOLA INVENTED OUR BONE CERAMIZATION TECHNIQUE
BUT HER OWN OSTEOPOROSIS WAS TOO FAR ADVANCED
THE PROCESS MADE HER SKELETON BRITTLE AS GLASS
COULD I END UP LIKE THAT?
NO, NO YOU'RE YOUNG AND STRONG
JUST WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR


CAERA, ISN'T IT? YOU LOOK WELL, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
IT'S AN HONOR MISS LAMB
I IMAGINE YOU'RE READY TO START YOUR TREATMENTS
YES, MA'AM. I'VE EVEN PICKED OUT MY CODE NAME

OH, THE CODE NAMES NOT REALLY NECESSARY, ANYMORE
JACOB AND KEVIN CAME UP WITH THEM, AS I RECALL.


I HAVE DISTANT RELATIVES -- SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT THEM?
MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO USE CODE NAMES, LIKE 'JACOB DOE'
THAT'S AN EXCELLENT IDEA, JACOB. WE'VE ALREADY GOT A 'LOLA LAMB'
WE CAN HAVE 'PETER PUP', AND I'LL BE 'KEVIN KIDD'

I'M SERIOUS, KEVIN
SO AM I! AND WE'LL HAVE --
JOEY
JUST 'JOEY'

FRANK, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE CAERA A QUICK TOUR?
I NEED TO CHAT WITH KEVIN FOR A BIT

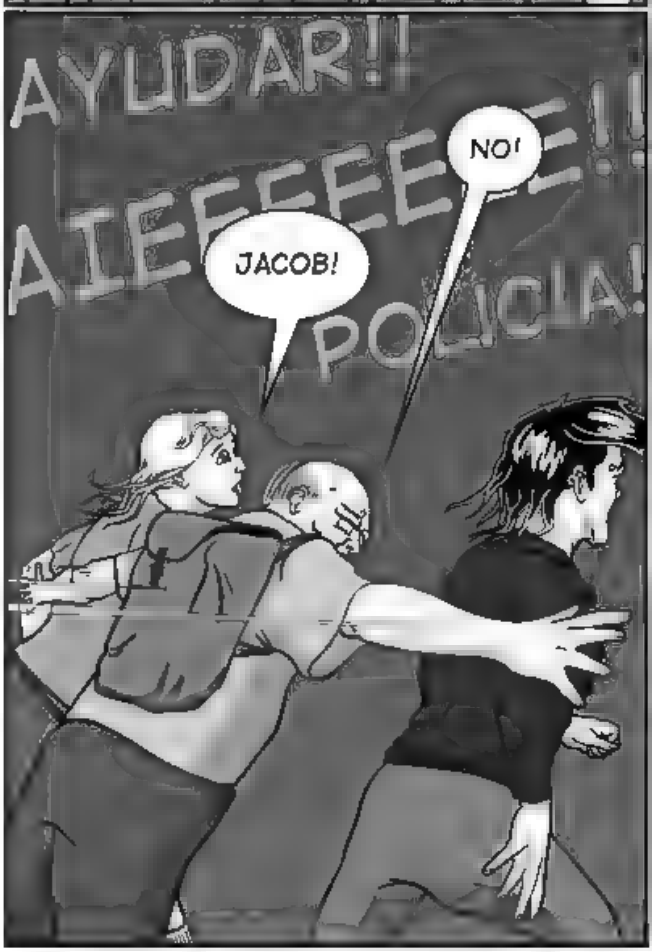
SHE'S TINY, KEVIN
SO ARE YOU
I WAS NEVER A COMBAT SPECIALIST
DOES SHE HAVE THE GUAYAQUIL COMPLEX?
YES
BUT SHE ALSO HAS AN OBSESSIVE PERSONALITY
WHICH I BELIEVE I CAN CHEMICALLY TWEAK INTO TRUE AGGRESSION
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PACIFIST AND THE PSYCHOPATH, I THINK I CAN MAKE WHAT WE NEED
YOUR REPORT SAID THAT JACOB'S BLOOD WAS ON HER SWORD
WE CAN'T LET ANYONE STUDY THAT SAMPLE
ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF
BEFORE I LEFT, I RELEASED A LIMITED GENERATION EBOLA
EVERYONE IN THAT HOSPITAL SHOULD BE DEAD IN A FEW DAYS.
THAT -- THAT WAS UNNECESSARY, KEVIN
PERHAPS. BUT AS YOU SAID .
I DON'T REALLY HAVE TO ASK PERMISSION ANY MORE

ATTENTION PASSENGERS -- AS WE APPROACH OUR DESTINATION IN TOLROS, BRAZIL, WE HAVE A RARE WHALE SIGHTING FOR YOU. GO DOWN TO THE DINING CAR AND LOOK OUT THE RIGHT SIDE
SOME WHALES WERE INFECTED DURING THE PLAGUE YEARS. THE DISEASE CREATES HUGE, AIR-FILLED BLADDERS ON THEIR SKIN. IT'S NOT FATAL, BUT INFECTED WHALES TEND TO TRAVEL ALONE
THIS FELLOW SEEMS TO BE WATCHING US -- EVERYBODY WAVE AS WE GO BY!
HUH?
GIR!
THOUGHT WE'D FIND YOU HERE
COME ON, WE'LL BE IN BRAZIL SOON. WE NEED A PLAN

ROGER SAYS THE A I 'S TRAIL LEADS DEEP INTO THE AMAZON
SO WE STEAL A CAR --
RENT
FINE WE RENT A CAR
AND SKIP STRAIGHT TO THE END
BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS TERMINAL FAST
IF THEY SUSPECT WE TOOK THE TRAIN OUT OF DAKAR
THIS IS WHERE THEY'D BE WAITING

HOWDY, JAKE!
WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D NOTICE ME!
JOEY!
RUN!
JUST RUN!

OH, ARE THOSE YOUR NEW MATES?
I SHOULD INTRODUCE MYSELF
AND CLEAR SOME OF THESE LOOKY-LOOS AWAY


AYUDAR!!
AIEEEEEE!!
POLICIA!
NO!
JACOB!

I'M FINE - KEEP RUNNING!
PARAR!
FREEZE!

PUT THE GUN ON THE FLOOR AND RAISE YOUR --
LOOK, MATE. I'M A GENOCIDE MAN
I'M CHASING THE SECOND-MOST DANGEROUS BLOKE IN THE WORLD
AND YOU JUST RUINED MY FUN
YOU'RE STILL BREATHING SO YOU CAN CALL YOUR SUPERIORS
TELL THEM TO KEEP EVERYONE OUT OF MY WAY
MAYBE GET SOME MEDICAL HELP FOR YOUR FRIENDS, TOO.
I'VE GOT TO FILL OUT PAPERWORK WHEN I KILL COPS
HATE THAT

STOP HOVERING I'M FINE
BUT HE --
MY COMBAT CHEMICALS INCLUDE ANTIDOTES TO 6M NEUROTOXIN
JUST HAVE TO KEEP MY ADRENALINE UP RUN FASTER

YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T KILL EACH OTHER?
NOT WITH THE RAIL GUNS
BUT JOEY WILL KILL EVERYONE NEARBY
HE KNOWS IT'LL THROW ME OFF

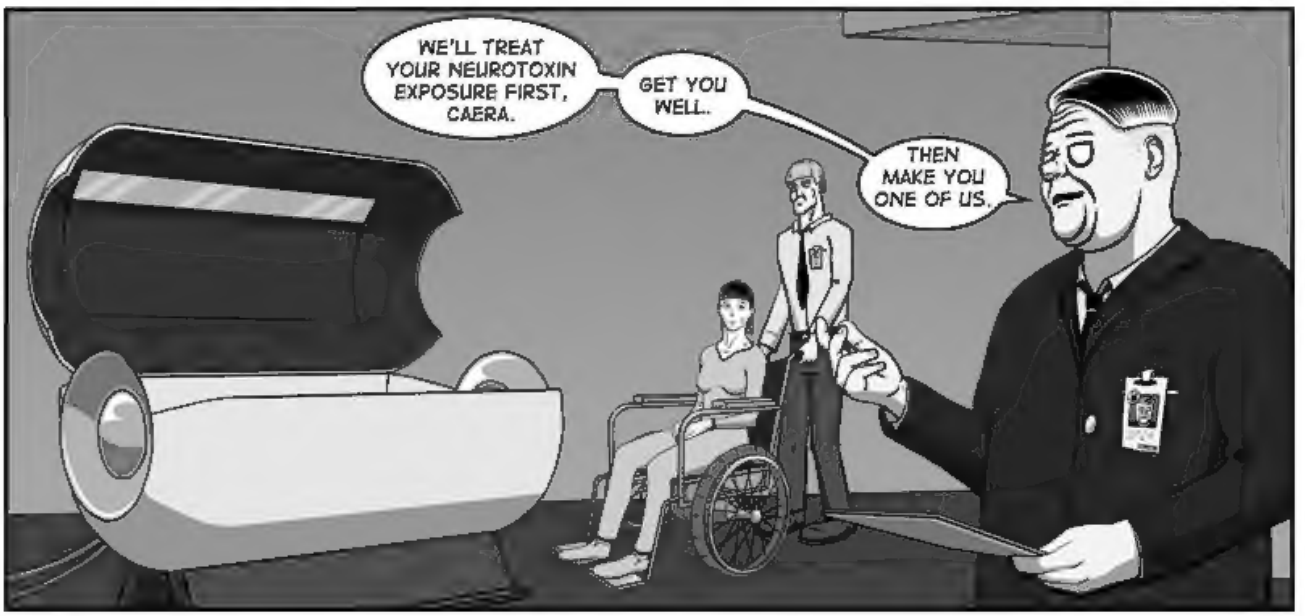
WE TOOK AWAY HIS GENOCIDE CASE CAUSE HE'S TOO PSYCHOPATHIC
USED TO LET LOOSE EPIDEMICS JUST FOR FUN
SO YOU'RE THE NICE GENOCIDAL MURDERER?
THOUGHT I TOLD YOU THAT ALREADY

HEY! THIS WAY!
TRANSPORTE TE
GROUND TRANS
EMBARQUE DE TAXI AQUATICO
AUTOMATED WATER TAXI STA
TAXIS ACUATICO
EMISSÃO DE BILHE
TICKETING
VENTAS DE ENTRA
ABOUT TIME I GOT TO USE MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT

THIS COULD WORK
WE'LL PULL JOEY TO A PLACE WHERE HE CAN'T KILL INNOCENTS.
THEN I HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WHEN HE CATCHES US.
HOW ABOUT HE NOT CATCH UP TO US?
DON'T FOOL YOURSELF THIS WILL BARELY SLOW JOEY DOWN
JACOB, YOU MAY KNOW HOW TO FIGHT
BUT I KNOW HOW TO RUN AWAY
I LOVE MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT
YOU HIRED ALL OF THE TAXIS?

THIS WON'T STOP HIM.
HE'S A GENOCIDE MAN.

HEH. RUN A LITTLE MORE, MATE.
PUT MORE PEOPLE BETWEEN US...
...HELP ME RACK UP MY BODY COUNT.


WE'LL TREAT YOUR NEUROTOXIN EXPOSURE FIRST, CAERA.
GET YOU WELL..
THEN MAKE YOU ONE OF US.

YOU'LL GET INJECTIONS IN THIS HYPERBARIC CHAMBER.

THAT'LL TAKE ABOUT TWO WEEKS, EIGHT HOURS A DAY.

THEN SURGERY, TO REPLACE YOUR ENDOCRINE SYSTEM.

THEN SKELETAL CERAMIZATION TREATMENTS, AND TRAINING.

WHAT ABOUT THE EYES?

EYES?

YOUR EYES... ALL YOU GENOCIDE MEN...

...YOUR EYES ARE SO COLD AND DEAD.

AS IF YOU'VE LOST YOUR SOULS.

THE PROCEDURE DOESN'T AFFECT THE EYES.

CLANG

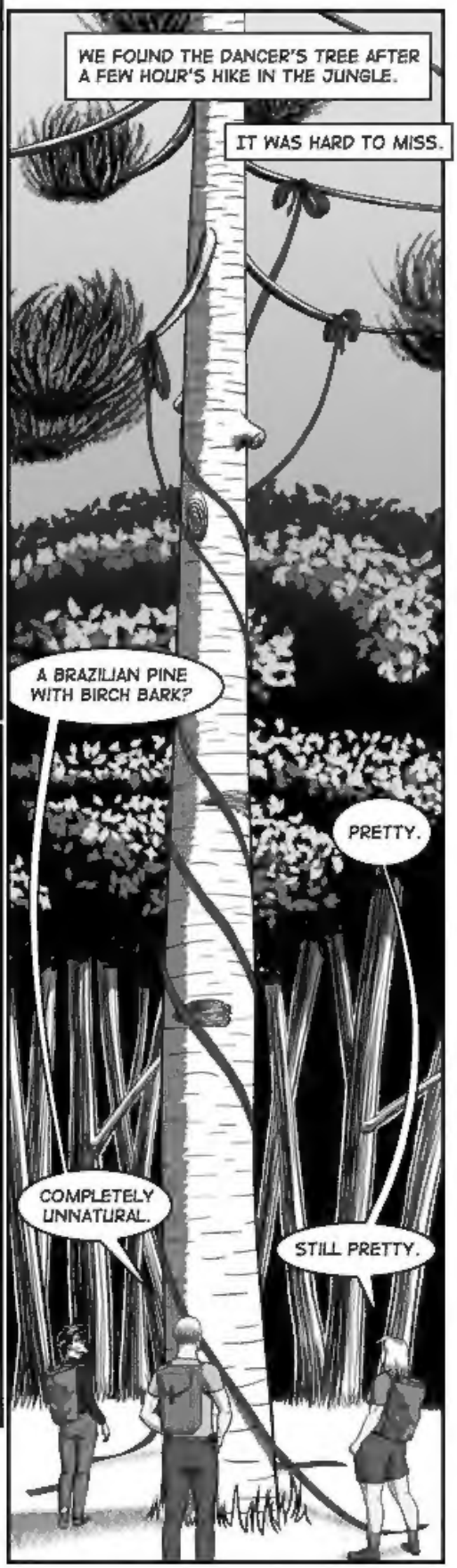
NEXT -- CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DANCER'S TREE

GENOCIDE MAN
CHAPTER 7
THE DANCER'S TREE
BY BOAT, BUS, AND CAR, WE WENT DEEP INTO MATO GROSSO -- THE AMAZON.
I GOT WORRIED ABOUT MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT.
WHEN I TRIED TO CONTACT MY EDITOR AND COULDN'T. I GOT REALLY WORRIED.
THE UNDERNET GOES DOWN SOMETIMES, BUT IT WAS BAD TIMING.
THEN...WELL, THEN THERE WAS GIRII.
THAT MAKES THREE CROCODILES, SEVEN SNAKES, AND TWENTY-EIGHT PARROTS THAT WE'VE SEEN!
AND I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY, I'M PRETTY SURE THAT WAS A MONKEY EARLIER.
OH, AND BY THE WAY, I KNOW YOU'RE BOTH KEEPING SECRETS FROM ME.
HUH?
I MEAN, I WON'T PRY, 'CAUSE I'M A NICE EMPATH.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT I KNOW.
DRIVE, SVENGALI.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

THE A.I.'S DIRECTIONS SENT US TO A LITTLE VILLAGE NAMED RUACRENCA.
OUR LAST INSTRUCTION WAS TO BUY PINEAPPLES --

-- AND ASK FOR 'LARGO'.
SI, LARGO.
YOU'LL FIND HIM AT THE DANCER'S TREE. I'LL SHOW YOU A MAP.
YOU WILL NEED MANY PINEAPPLES.


WE FOUND THE DANCER'S TREE AFTER A FEW HOUR'S HIKE IN THE JUNGLE.
IT WAS HARD TO MISS.
A BRAZILIAN PINE WITH BIRCH BARK?
PRETTY.
COMPLETELY UNNATURAL.
STILL PRETTY.